

July 1, 2010

WASHINGTON, DC -U.S. Rep. Michael Arcuri (NY-24) successfully offered an amendment stripping the 'sweetheart deal' given to big oil and gas in the 2005 Energy Bill during the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's consideration of the *Oil Spill Accountability and Environmental Protection Act of 2010* (H.R. 5629) this afternoon. The amendment, authored by Arcuri, would help protect surface water from drilling site runoff contamination by removing the special exemption from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) stormwater permit requirements through the Clean Water Act when constructing drilling sites. The Arcuri amendment passed with strong bipartisan support by a voice vote.

"This amendment seeks to hold big oil and gas to the same environmental standards as every other industry in preventing unnecessary runoff from construction sites that could contaminate our rivers, lakes streams," **said Arcuri**. "By giving them a pass on this important regulation, we're essentially assuming the oil and gas industries will take the necessary environmental precautions on their own. That's the same sort of fast-track approach that led to the BP oil spill."

This amendment is part of a larger strategy on the part of Reps. Arcuri, Maurice Hinchey (NY-22), Diana DeGette (CO-01) and Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman James Oberstar (MN-08) to ensure that oil and gas development is conducted in a manner that does not threaten public health or the environment.

Before 2005, EPA had begun to issue stormwater regulations for the construction of oil and gas drilling sites. In the middle of this process, the Energy Policy Act of 2005 was signed into law, giving the oil and gas industries a permanent exemption for all construction activities related to oil and gas exploration and production.

These construction activities can contribute more sediment runoff than would otherwise be deposited over several decades, causing physical and biological harm to our lakes, rivers, streams and bays. Every other type of development is required under law to get a permit from EPA that covers stormwater management during construction - except for the oil and gas industries.

Arcuri added, "Say you are a farmer building a new barn on your property, or a homebuilder developing a new subdivision, or for that matter, building a single home-you need a stormwater runoff permit from the EPA before you can begin anything. It's mind-boggling that every single form of development and construction requires a permit from the EPA to ensure our surface water is protected from contamination except for oil and gas drilling and exploration sites."

Arcuri's efforts to offer this amendment to the Oil Spill Accountability and Environmental Protection Act of 2010 (H.R. 5629) has been endorsed by a number of national sportsmen and environmental organizations including:

- Sportsmen for Responsible Energy Development;
- National Wildlife Federation;
- Trout Unlimited
- Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
- American Rivers;
- Clean Water Action;
- Natural Resources Defense Council;
- Sierra Club;
- The Wilderness Society;
- Earthjustice;
- EARTHWORKS;
- Environmental Working Group;
- Environment America;
- Allegheny Defense Project;
- Californians for Western Wilderness;
- Delaware Riverkeeper Network;
- Denton Citizens for Responsible;
- Northeast Ohio Gas Accountability Project;
- North Fork Ranch Landowner's Association;
- Southern Environmental Law Center;
- Texas OGAP;
- Upper Green River Alliance; and,
- Western Organization of Resource Councils.

The *Oil Spill Accountability and Environmental Protection Act of 2010* (H.R. 5629), which included Arcuri's amendment, was reported favorably by the committee. As the fight now moves to the House Floor, Arcuri will continue to work with Rep. Maurice Hinchey (NY-22) and other environmental advocates.

[Click here to watch Arcuri deliver remarks during debate of his amendment today at the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee hearing.](#)

[Click here for a transcription of his remarks.](#)

[Click here to read letters of support from the various sportsmen and environmental organizations supporting Arcuri's amendment.](#)